

Message Text

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S E C R E T KUWAIT 3136

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS KU MU

SUBJ: KUWAITI-OMANI RELATIONS

SUMMARY: RECENT EXPULSION OF CHARGE IN OMAN OVER ALLEGED MISDEEDS HAS BROUGHT OMANI-KUWAITI RELATIONS TO NEW LOW. OMANIS HAVE BEEN UNHAPPY WITH KUWAITI AID TO PDRY AND KUWAITIS HAVE ATTCKED USE OF IRANIAN TROOPS IN OMAN. THIS NEW INCIDENT IS JUST ONE OF SERIES OF EVENTS IN STEADY DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS. LACK OF MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO STATES IS PRIME FACTOR IN THIS DETERIORATION. PERHAPS USG CAN STEP UP ITS ROLE IN GETTING THESE TWO STATES TOGETHER IN INTEREST OF GENERAL AREA SECURITY AND CONSTRUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. KUWAITI-OMANI RELATIONS, WHICH SUFFERED SETBACK IN JANUARY 1974 WHEN VISIT OF SULTAN QABUS TO KUWAIT WAS CANCELLED BECAUSE OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON USE OF IRANIAN TROOPS IN OMAN, REACHED NEW LOW WHEN KUWAITI CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, ABD-AL-LATIF AL-DUWAYSAN WAS ASKED TO LEAVE OMAN FOR "ACTIONS EXCEEDING HIS AUTHORITY."

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2. DUWAYSAN'S EXPULSION CAME TO LIGHT IN ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN

BEIRUT DAILY AL-NAHAR FROM ITS GULF CORRESPONDENT RIYADH AL-RAYYIS. UNTIL THAT TIME, EXPULSION, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN EARLY JULY, WAS KEPT QUIET. AFTER EXPULSION BECAME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, GOK EXPRESSED REGRET AND PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER SHAIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD AL-SABAH SENT A NOTE TO HIS OMANI COUNTERPART, QAYS AL-ZAWAWI ASKING FOR EXPLANATION.

3. WHILE IT IS TRUE DUWAYSAN HAD BEEN MAKING UNAUTHORIZED CONTACTS IN MUSCAT AND OFTEN TRAVELLED INTO INNER OMAN WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION, AND HAD BEEN WARNED ABOUT THIS, EXPULSION IS PART OF LARGER MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN OMAN AND KUWAIT ON KUWAITI INTENTIONS IN AREA.

4. KUWAIT HAS FREQUENTLY EXPRESSED ITS DISPLEASURE AT USE OF IRANIAN TROOPS BY OMAN IN SUPPRESSING REBELLION IN DHOFAR. AT ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN LAHORE, ZAWAWI OPENLY UPBRAIDED KUWAIT FOR THIS POSITION, STATING THAT ARAB STATES AND NOTABLY KUWAIT, HAD FAILED TO RESPOND TO OMANI REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN PUTTING DOWN THIS FOREIGN-SUPPORTED REBELLION. KUWAIT RESPONDED THAT IT NEVER RECEIVED SUCH REQUEST. THIS SEEMS UNLIKELY, AND FACT THAT KUWAIT HAS DONE NOTHING SINCE THAT EXCHANGE APPEARS TO BEAR OUT ZAWAWI'S CHARGE. KUWAIT, OBVIOUSLY, DOES NOT WISH TO BECOME INVOLVED MILITARILY, WHICH IS WHAT OMAN WANTS.

5. KUWAIT BELIEVES IT CAN SOLVE PROBLEM BY DIPLOMATIC MEANS, AND ROUTE IT HAS CHOSEN DOES NOT SATISFY OMAN. KUWAIT BELIEVES PDRY IS KEY TO SOLUTION OF DHOFAR REBELLION BECAUSE PDRY IS SUPPORTING REBELS AND PROVIDING THEM SAFE HAVEN. KUWAIT, THEREFORE, FEELS THAT MODERATE PDRY REGIME WILL SOON LOSE INTEREST IN DHOFAR. KUWAIT HAS UNDERTAKEN FAIRLY SUBSTANTIAL AID PROGRAM IN PDRY TO "GIVE PDRY AN ALTERNATIVE TO SOVIET BLOC DEPENDENCE AND BRING IT BACK INTO ARAB MAINSTREAM." OMAN CONSIDERS SUCH AID AS INDIRECT AID TO REBELS, CITING FACT THERE HAS BEEN NO NOTICEABLE DECREASE IN PDRY AID TO REBELS.

6. KUWAITI POLICY IS FOR LONG TERM, WHILE OMAN IS FACING REBELLION NOW. INCOMPATIBILITY OF THESE TWO VIEWS DOES NOT AUGUR WELL FOR IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS IN NEAR FUTURE. PDRY MINISTERS HAVE BEEN TROOPING IN AND OUT OF KUWAIT IN RECENT WEEKS MAKING
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FLATTERING STATEMENTS ABOUT KUWAITI ASSISTANCE. THIS ONLY FORTIFIES KUWAITI BELIEF THAT THEY ARE MOVING RIGHT DIRECTION.

7. COMMENT: MAIN PROBLEM IN OMANI-KUWAITI RELATIONS IS THAT THERE IS NO DIALOGUE. THEY ARE ATTACKING EACH OTHER FROM AFAR, USUALLY THROUGH THEIR LOCAL MEDIA. OVER PAST TWO YEARS WE HAVE MADE LOW KEY CONTACTS WITH KEY OMANI AND KUWAITI OFFICIALS WITH VIEW TO INDUCING THEM TO RECONCILE THEIR DIFFERENCES IN INTEREST

WIDER AREA SECURITY AND STABILITY. HOWEVER, US COULD POSSIBLY
PLAY MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN URGING THESE TWO STATES TO STOP
AIRING THEIR DIRTY LINEN IN PUBLIC AND START BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS
ON THEIR RELATIONS AND AREA PROBLEMS.
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